The

COMMONWEAL

A Weekly Review of Literature the Arts and Public Affairs

FOUNDED BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

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Strikes: Political and Economic

ORGANIZED LABOR continues to face turbulent days in America. The ill-considered and hastily enacted law abolishing the prevailing wage scale on WPA projects threatens to beat down American wage standards won by decades of bloody struggle. The motives that inspired it are humanly understandable, but that does not justify them. At present writing the strike of WPA workers against the provisions of the new law seems to show little likelihood of succeeding. The strike being essentially a political strike, there is no way to support it directly while supporting our constitutional form of government, which must take precedence even now in these bad circumstances. Pressure must be exerted indirectly, on our representatives, to establish finally more reasonable and clear public works and relief systems.

A Positive Trend

Under the circumstances, should Congressional efforts to repeal the new enactment fail, and should the strike likewise fail, the rest of American labor must soon feel the repercussions in a drive for reduced wages and modification of present working conditions. The public must not permit the WPA strike to ruin the labor front in private enterprise. Support there will be more necessary than ever before. One gratifying aspect of the situation is the solidarity manifested by AFL and CIO unions in protesting the new law.

The General Motors strike now in progress, though confusing in many respects, indicates the inevitability of cooperation between craft and industrial unionism. Though the automobile industry was organized on an industrial union basis by the CIO, the present strike is mainly on behalf of a special craft, the tool and die-makers. Thus the CIO finds it necessary to adopt a craft policy presumably reserved to the AFL, which in turn has already been forced to imitate CIO industrial policies. A real basis in workers' interests for the split between our two national labor organizations is fast disappearing.

The Voice of the "Tablet"

THE VOICE, organ of a Committee of Catholics to Fight Anti-Semitism, whose appearance THE COMMONWEAL welcomed a few weeks ago, does not please the Brooklyn *Tablet.* That a group of Catholics should come together specifically to combat anti-Semitism and show its incompatibility with Christianity appears to be bewildering and disturbing to the Managing Editor of the interesting and lively paper from across the river.

Anti-Anti-Semitism

There are bad things whose inclusive and ultimate definition is impossible, and whose presence is sometimes difficult to perceive. Fraud is one of these; so is anti-Semitism. The courts have consistently refused to render a binding and lasting and all-inclusive definition of fraud, for fear that knaves will think up fraudulent schemes not foreseen when the word was given its final and unalterable definition. But the courts have given us many "working" definitions of fraud, and have pointed out some of the elements which constitute fraud.

Of course no man can say what anti-Semitism is in the consciences of those who hold it, but it can be seen working in society, as persecution of Jews because they are Jews. It does not have to be direct, open and declared to be recognized. The *Tablet* broadly implies that there are different kinds of anti-Semitism, some of which the Holy See does not object to. We have never seen a list of the types endorsed by the Popes and have not heard of its existence.

The offense is not only against charity, but against reason. The *Catholic Mind* of June 8 says: "It is not a true return to Christian public life if such a return consists merely of anti-Jewish meas-

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ures and not in the elevation of Christian morality to the norm of public morality . . ." That is an interesting and provocative general principle.

The *Tablet* feels the "so-called 'Committee of Catholics to Fight Anti-Semitism,' " whose "mouthpiece" is the *Voice* (Why "so-called," *Tablet?* What would *you* call it?) are "chasing after something which scarcely exists," at the very time when in New York "we have the headquarters of the greatest anti-Christian drive in the history of the United States." The reference is perhaps to the Witnesses of Jehovah. Now the "Witnesses" is a sinister and bitterly anti-Catholic organinzation, but its attack on the Catholic Church seems to us a trivial thing when compared with the great and temporally dominant secular surge of the World. Is the League of Atheists the worst enemy endured by Christianity in Russia? Clearly not; if the League were abolished in the Soviet Union and that were all, the offensive against Christianity in Russia would be scarcely reduced. The drive in America against Christianity is something deeper, broader and more horrible than anything that can come out of the Watch Tower, and "anti-measures" are not going to check it, not even anti-anti-Semitism, however necessary that it.

For anti-Semitism is a touchstone, amalgamated in a mass of anger and hysteria. It is the desperate fascist drive against the government of men by objective and reasonable law, whose ultimate source and foundation is God; a drive to make labor unfree and to impose exploitation by force and terror—to wipe out the consciousness of real spiritual and political and economic problems by concentrated emotional fury against a scapegoat. Even this complex and hateful attack on man from the Right is of course only a fragment of the World which is set up against the City of God. There is the dead materialism of our dry-rot secularism with its lack of aspiration and uncritical seeking of bodily pleasure; and there are the positive denials of the Left. But the fragment that embodies anti-Semitism is dynamic now. It is active and destructive, as radium, and opposition to it should be no "laughable" matter to the diocesan paper of Brooklyn.

Governor Lehman's Speech

OURS IS a mixed time, with some best things and many worst ones. It was significant of one of the best that the thirty-seventh international convention of Christian Endeavor, meeting recently in Cleveland, should have asked Governor Lehman of this state to address it. It was equally significant that the Governor should have chosen as his topic the truth that religion is alike the source and the defense of democracy. This is a statement made oftener today than during the liberal-agnostic dispensation of yesterday; indeed, the utterance of it begins to be more frequent than the full realization of its meaning. Patient analysis, such as Governor Lehman employs, shows us the historical foundations of our country in principles demonstrably spiritual. We see afresh what believers, whether Christian or Jewish, should never forget: that that care for the individual man's rights and opportunities, that defense of his dignity, which true democracy gives, are but the under part, as it were, of a still loftier truth, the value of his soul.

The Root of Democracy

"The two great commands found in both the Old Testament and the News," says the Governor, " 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God' and 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,' . . . constitute the soul of American democracy." And as the Catholic may, with no touch of religious disloyalty or indifferentism, recognize and honor spiritual and moral truths wherever he finds them, so he must make common cause for their defense wherever they are in danger. "Dark though these days are in some countries," the Governor reminds us, "yet everywhere there are men who still find light in religion; and tyranny itself is forced to realize that men of sincere religion are its most dangerous foes." And the way to keep these proud words forever true is for each one of us to cherish, in all their manifestations, that "charity, justice and tolerance" which, as they are "the basis of all true religion," are also the basis of all lasting democracy.

Sanita Lodge

THERE IS something altogether pleasant about the news stories and photographs concerning the official opening of the late Otto Kahn's estate on Long Island to workers of the New York City Department of Sanitation. Twenty-two thousand white wings and their families turned out for the occasion and consumed 35 kegs and 18,000 bottles of beer, 6,000 frankfurters and a ton of roasted meats. Mr. Kahn's sons, the city's Commissioner of Sanitation and the local Republican party leader acted as dedicators. It is reported that the visiting multitude did no damage whatever, either to the building or the grounds, although the general American habit of letting trash fall where it may seems to characterize street cleaners as much as the rest of us. Presumably the white wings in turn must employ their own white wings to clean up after them, which is as it should be. Imagine the delight of a man who spends his days picking up scraps of papers when he is afforded an opportunity to drop all the scraps he wants to himself! The episode dramatically underlines the end of that era of conspicuous spending by millionaires which led to the construction of the thousands of

White Wings in a Castle

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castles without principalities that dot favored portions of the American countryside. Quite apart from the question of expense, the millionaires seem to have lost their taste for castles, and their children never had the taste anyway. So gradually the castles will be converted to charitable or at least social uses. Mr. Kahn's chateau is but one of many, and the movement is a healthy one.

Hold-Up in Minneapolis

ANCIENT legends of the power of innocence depict infancy as immune from the fang or claw of wild beasts. A modern novel, Richard Hughes's "High Wind in Jamaica," draws a picture whose under side is pure horror but whose purpose is parallel: to suggest the moral invulnerability of children too young to be aware of the more dreadful sins. Experience has shown most of us that this is at least partly true. And a current example comes in the story of a Minneapolis hold-up, staged during the weekly managers' meeting of a large commodities store. The two officiating robbers forced the ten adults present to lie on the floor while the looting was in progress. The three young children also present finally consented to lie down too, when their fathers (two of the managers) persuaded them it was a game. The recumbent grown-ups played the game in silence; not so the youngsters. They poured a barrage of questions upon the bandits which would undoubtedly have earned them a bullet apiece if they had been older. "Why are you carrying that?" (a pistol of course); "What are you doing that for?" (jimmying the desk); "Why are we on the floor?" And so forth, as any mother can easily imagine. Stony silence only prompted a fresh attack. The embarrassed bad men looked everywhere except at their determined young interlocutors, and finally departed in a thorough fluster. They were not flustered so completely as to forget to take away about $7,000, unfortunately. But that would have been an ending patented by the movies and life notoriously takes time to catch up with art.

The Children Were Present

The King and Queen Retrospectively

LE JOUR, a Montreal weekly, has been doing a bit of Galloping (might one say, after a *Fortune?*) of its own. It got the "Psychological Institute (Montreal)" to conduct a public opinion survey concerning the visit of their Britannic Majesties to the Dominion. An equal number of French and English were asked the questions and were allowed to say what most impressed them—if anything—about the royal tour. One amusing result is the fact that on fourteen out of the fifteen questions, many more French had definite views than English. In one extreme case 28 percent of the English "didn't know," whereas every single Frenchman had his positive views—either "yes" or "no." The one question which got less French response than English seems also to us the most inconsequential: "Should the Prime Minister have traveled across the country with the Royal Party?" It would be hard to draw any conclusion about the relative loyalty to the Empire of either group. The French have always been isolationists; in the last war they just wouldn't have any part of conscription or voluntary enlistment (naturally there were exceptions). So it comes as a surprise that only 66 percent would not "be in favor of sending a Canadian army overseas in case England goes to war." It also comes as a surprise that only 59 percent of the English would favor it. Perhaps as time goes on linguistic differences in Canada are becoming less intense; the nation, more one. And it is also indicative of their character that 21 French people volunteered the information that what most impressed them was their Majesties' "pleasing manner." Evidently an appreciation of courtesy is still a salient characteristic of the French Canadian.

"Pleasing Manner"

Catholics and the American Way

THE COMMONWEAL'S personal poll indicates that rarely have we published an article more agreeable to readers than "Catholics and the American Way," by Robert C. Pollock, which appeared two weeks ago. Besides expressions of deliberately tested opinion, an encouraging number of spontaneously and provocatively expressed favorable opinions came in as letters to the editors, some of which are printed this week. American Catholics desire and believe in democracy and clear expressions of that fact, such as those uttered by many in the Cleveland Social Action Conference, at the Virginia Institute by Bishop O'Hara, weekly in the *New World* of Chicago, and in THE COMMONWEAL too, furnish a sense of happy release. Crude socialists who try to identify fascism and the Church, together with reactionaries and ideologists within the fold of the Church who appear to scorn democracy, make it necessary now increasingly to display the harmony of our religious and democratic traditions. It can be said that asserting this fact solves no problems. That is true: we must not let slogans consume our energy or relax our moral and nervous tension. In order to make them vital, our traditions must grow to help us with many contemporary difficulties. And we want no narrowing ideology which identifies Truth with a temporary, historical technique of political and economic government. But we do live in a particular time and particular place, and an examination and assertion of American Christian democracy appears to be a good first step in building the resolve to work for the social expression of the commands of charity.

The Poll Is Positive

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America Becomes Animal-Minded

Is our agriculture tending away from crops toward animal husbandry? Mr. Wilson thinks so.

By Charles Morrow Wilson

THERE IS at least a chance that historians of the year 2039 will be listing our era as the American age of animal-mindedness. There is also a chance that they may be writing of our times as the beginning of an animal-minded century.

In final definition man's love of animals defies all boundaries of trades, ages and nations. Ever since Abraham counted his wealth in head of livestock, or since David learned his statesmanship by observing the habits of his flocks, at least potentially people have been animal-minded.

Actually reverence for livestock and domestic animals appears to increase with man's numerical ascendancy over other productive animals. From a standpoint of census, man is now by odds the most numerous of all "higher" forms of animal life. According to approximations gathered by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, there are nearly twice as many people in the world as there are cattle; four times as many human beings as hogs; almost twice as many people as sheep; more than fifty humans for every horse.

In the United States these ratios are generally true. We have about twice as many people as cattle; about two and a half times as many people as sheep; three times as many people as swine; ten times as many people as horses and perhaps six times as many people as dogs. But the newer livestock census show that when taken in aggregate the United States now has more domestic animals per capita than any other nation of the modern world. Further, in distribution, average productiveness and total market value, the livestock of the United States is now the most valuable in the world.

For the past ten years income from animals and fowls has averaged about one-half the total farm income of the United States. Last year animal and poultry income to American farms was almost five billion dollars, or about 55 percent of the entire agricultural income. At the present rate of animal increase it seems highly probable that another twenty-five years may see three-fourths of all American farm income taken from animals and fowls.

This likelihood rests partly upon our ever-growing dilemma of failing soils. Grain, cotton and other field crops continue to rob American soils of precious reserves of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, the three chemicals which are absolutely essential to any solvent agriculture. To replenish these chemicals requires the expenditure of billions of dollars for fertilizers, so long as farming deals with field crops to be harvested and removed from the land.

But the flesh and worth of grazing livestock arises principally from the non-mineral elements of grains and grasses—the starches and chlorophylls which nature devises principally of water and carbon dioxide and sunlight. When animals feed directly from the land, the greater portion of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, chemically essential to fertility, are returned to the soil in animal manures.

There are other timely and practical motives for the new renaissance of the animal in the United States. On the whole we Americans are no longer complete yeomen. We still have the dominant urge to manufacture or to produce by clearly defined routine. Animal husbandry is at least one step further in production of foods and materials than is ordinary field farming. In reality the livestock grower is a sort of manufacturer. Grass, forages and grains are his raw materials. He takes a bushel of corn and a forkful of hay and by the medium of livestock manufactures it into meat, milk, wool, butter, cheese, horsepower, leather and various other commodities.

Animal husbandry is safer

Thus as an agrarian manufacturer he is protected in real measure from eccentric shifts and changes in grain and produce prices. He is no longer the groping producer of an annual crop, since five years is the recognized production span for cattle, six or seven years for horses or mules and two or three years for sheep or hogs. It is worth noticing that in all the six years of colossal subsidies to farms and farmers of the Roosevelt administration, more than 92 percent of all the billions of dollars in "pap money" has gone into the pockets of annual crop farmers, the "harassed" growers of cotton, wheat, tobacco, rice and other annual crops. The New Deal in agriculture has endeavored to classify hogs and corn as an identical crop. It has rendered or attempted to render emergency aid to range cattle industries and advisory aid to the milk industries. But the thrust

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of stress and emergency administration has been claimed by the annual field crops. On the whole livestock farmers continue to prove themselves the most self-provident and self-sufficient of our great farming public. Farm census figures now indicate that the upper fourth of American farms now earn more than 60 percent of the total non-political farm income of the United States and that a majority of the "upper fourth" raise livestock.

From a standpoint of dollars and cents the keeping of barnyard animals becomes more profitable as the nation grows older and as soils continue to wear out. For example, Vermont, one of our oldest farming states, now has more milk cattle than people—one of the few land surfaces of the world where this is the case. Buxom Iowa, long known as the granary of the Midwest, is rapidly turning from field crops to livestock. Once the foremost corn state of the nation, Iowa is now the foremost hog state. In Wisconsin where greedy frontier farmers sold the wealth of the soil in the form of cash wheat, and where equally greedy timbermen turned what might have been an eternal wealth of forest to quick cash cargoes of paper and matches, five out of every six farm dollars are now animal dollars.

Other instances can be listed by the pagefuls. Also it can be pointed out quite aptly and with sound economic background that the new "philosophy" of soil conservation which is now being "sold" so avidly by the various agricultural arms and services of the government is really a creed of grass; a vast drive to save farm lands and farm futures by shifting a higher and higher percentage of tilled lands to grasses, legumes and other perennial cover crops so that the soil may be sewed in place. But any agriculture of grass is of sheer necessity a livestock agriculture, and continuation of soil conservation as we now define the term is leading us farther and farther into this new age of domestic livestock.

It is always easy to exaggerate the force of profit motive in American temperament and American trends. This new age of animal-mindedness is far from being entirely economic in inspiration. To a convincing degree it is also grounded in the perennial creative urge of Americans. When and if one writes a great story or poem or paints a great picture or composes a great sermon or discovers a memorable truth in medicine or science or founds a great business, he can contemplate his finished work with a satisfying pride and feel a rewarding glow of attainment.

But literally millions of Americans are likewise finding a very real and creative satisfaction in working with the intangible pigments of blood or the miraculous clays of chromosomes so that they may help fashion a more perfect living animal than has ever walked before.

Animal breeding today

Animal breeding today has become definitely more than an abstruse science of the experimental farm. It is a work of joy as well as of profit. Its social implication is tremendous for it is actually creating a superior era of superior livestock. The work also abounds in human relationships, the working fraternity of many thousands of men and women and youths who are actively and experimentally occupied in the great work of adding to the beauty, utility and economies of animal life.

Attend a great livestock show or fair, or a membership meeting of any livestock association, or breed record association, and you will sense the strength of this human fraternity in animal endeavor. You will discover that common interest in the animal binds people into new and happy social relationships and inaugurates new friendships at wholesale. Work with animals is an extremely vital sort of work. A prize cow, or a thoroughbred horse, or a blue-ribbon ram is more than a mere commercial product. It is vastly more commanding of interest and pride than a basket of wheat or apples, or a bale of cotton, or any other casual harvest from tillage. For the animal evidences the immeasurable interests of being alive. It is a living link between preceding and continuing generations of superior animal life. After the grower has discovered the calf or colt at foaling, carried it to shelter, served it with food and water, followed its adventurous sequences of growth and development, the animal becomes a life and a personality as well as a product and its propagation and tenure are more than mere routine of production.

Animals can be made an ideally controlled population. With proper enterprise and diligence breeds and strains can be convincingly improved within a decade, or certainly within a human generation. This desire to better the breed and the accompanying need for painstaking care and work raises affection and actual working comradeships between man and animals.

Agriculture and the society which it engenders is foundationed by the specific and tangible and recurrent. The artistry and science of livestock breeding has long exerted an influence upon the life and growth of this nation which few American historians or economists have been sufficiently alert to discern or appraise. Yet even our poor history books tell us how such dominant American figures as Washington, Jefferson and Henry Clay were profoundly and actively interested in progress in livestock as identical with progress and development of an infant agrarian nation. To Washington we must give credit for having instituted some of the most memorable of American experimentation in the propagation of horses and mules for draft animals. Thomas Jefferson was a diligent student of the industries of cattle, of grazing re-

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sources and the evolution of graze animals. A little more than a century ago Henry Clay brought to his country estate near Lexington, Kentucky, the first registered cattle ever imported into the United States and won a lasting title as father of pedigreed livestock breeding and trading in the United States.

Today, and for the first time, there is appearing a distinctly American creed and practice of the animal pedigree, or breed registry. A pedigree is merely a properly vouched statement of the lineage of a given animal. Practically speaking it is worthwhile when it enables the owner or purchaser of an animal to see with his own eyes the merits or demerits of a given family or strain of livestock. Until the beginning of the 'thirties the pedigree was largely an imported credential. Breeds and strains of most livestock are of British, Scandinavian or other European origin. American glorification of foreign register resulted in strange orgies and fantasias of animal evaluation—at least during the heydays of the Insull Empire. During the fabulous 'twenties, Berkshire boars were selling for $10,000 apiece; Holstein calves for as much as $100,000; bulls with lives insured for as much as $75,000 were hired out for herd services at rental fees of anything from $5,000 to $8,000 a year.

With the close of the 'twenties, this inflated and dominantly foreign registry racket collapsed somewhat in advance of the fall of the Insull empire, and for much the same reasons. Owners of alleged $10,000 boars and $100,000 bulls were most definitely left out in the cold.

Now an age of reason has touched the vast industry of purebred livestock. Barnyard animal values are once more being geared to ultility and market worth. And we now have in the United States a world-famed and unrivaled assortment of breed record associations—eight for beef cattle, six for dairy cattle, five for draft horses, seven for riding horses, sixteen for sheep, thirteen for swine, two each for goats and for ponies and one for donkeys. Breed registry records now identify more than seven million purebred or thoroughbred animals, and more than half a million farms in the United States are now populated with purebred herds or flocks.

What it leads to

Altogether America's new age of the animal is an extremely challenging phenomenon. It leads along various and problematic trails. In the matter of agrarian trends it now seems easily possible that the trail is leading us backward, or forward, toward a modified pastoral civilization in numerous rural areas—which may and probably will drastically upset numerous arbitrary location values and current land valuations predicated upon the production of tillage or annual crops.

It may cause still greater areas of poor farms to be returned to range lands for cattle and sheep. Already hundreds of thousands of acres of poor lands are being shifted or subsidized to grasslands, which can be valuable only when tenanted by grazing livestock.

This eventuality would reduce land tenantry and upset the always rickety applecart of sharecropping. Quite conceivably it would change many thousands of tenant farmers to paid herdsmen or livestock laborers. It would offer the incentive for greater efficiency and better scientific research in commercial processing and merchandising of meats, wool and dairy products.

Almost certainly continuation of enthusiasm for domestic livestock will increase the average size of the American farm. A larger proportion of rural America in grass and grazing would stimulate importation of cheap-land grain from South America and Canada. In turn this would cancel great slices of real property taxes and demand more liberal administration of farm credit. And it would likewise cause the practice of agriculture to become more definitely a scientific and skilled profession.

Strange Love

A Caesar tinting red the sands of Gaul,
Buonaparte aflame at Arcole, all
These men of barrack room and sounding charge
Were seized with lust for power. Too large
A mind is not required to know their
Inner love. The merchant trading rare
Exotic goods of foreign lands but lives
For goodly profit; rampant youth gives
Gladly of his strength for brief delight;
Knowledge is the scholar's sole requite—

Such things the world can understand,
My friend, and you and I. These lusts command
Our daily lives. And yet a love we've seen
So strange ten thousand intellects more keen
Than ours can not explain. These men who go
Where Caesar's cohorts never trod, and know,
They claim, the very will of God: these men
Who seek not gold nor gain believe that when
Their bodies cold can feel no pain they're called
To everlasting ecstasy! A bald

Truth they say this is, and live and die
In absolute conviction! What think I?
You are the greater scholar, friend, and you
Have come to me in desperation. Through
Countless problems of the human mind
We've delved. Yet I confess I cannot find
What motivates these men called saints. The love
They hold enshrined must surely have its source above
This earth. The Christ they love, that man so odd,
Friend—do you think he really could be God?

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Italo-American

What it has borrowed from American English and what it is contributing to the American language.

By **Anthony M. Gisolfi**

Era smarto *il dabben uomo,*
Conosceva il bisinisso,
Era amico del polisso
E alle Tombe *non andò.*

The gentleman was smart—
He knew his businees,
He was a friend of the police:
To the Tombs he did not go.

SOME YEARS AGO H. L. Mencken discovered that American scholars with few exceptions considered it not quite dignified to spend too much time studying the spoken language of some one hundred millions of their fellow citizens. Since then the radio and the spoken films have unceremoniously thrust this speech upon polite ears everywhere—even upon those that had enjoyed the heretofore relative peace of an academic retreat. It has now become a popular subject for scholarly investigation.

With due regard, then, for standard English and the purest Tuscan we may consider that interesting phenomenon of the American scene, the speech of hundreds of thousands of Italian Americans and their American-born children.

Their south Italian dialects were beautifully reminiscent of Latin and Greek, at times even more than Italian itself, as Norman Douglas so charmingly tells in "Old Calabria." In that classic land he found that *tomorrow* was *craje* (Latin *cras*) and not *domani;* to rise was *surgere* (Latin *surgere*) and not *alzarsi; to arouse* was *scitare* (Latin *excitare*) and not *svegliare;* and *virtù* was still used in the sense of the Latin *virtus,* as strength. These dialects in the course of fifty years of American life, however, have taken on an entirely new dress. It appears they have changed more amazingly during this brief American sojourn than in the twenty centuries since Horace sang of Bandusian fount and Falernian wine. The classic *surgere,* for instance, has given way to no less formidable a term than *gheroppə* (get up). (*The inverted "e" indicates the neutral vowel sound similar to "e" in "the boy."*)

In our big cities, and particularly in New York, the dialects have merged with one another quite rapidly. Frequently a Calabrian has married an Apulian, a Neopolitan an Abruzzese, so that the speech of parents and children would necessarily have elements of both dialects, besides elements of Italian (lingering memories of primary instruction in Italy helping to bridge the two where vernacular forms were mutually obscure) and of English.

This composite speech has been variously styled Italian-American, Anglo-Neapolitan, New-York-Italian. All these designations share a fair degree of accuracy. What they wish to convey is that the speech in question has a distinct south Italian flavor with a generous, at times overwhelming, admixture of English and American words and phrases.

It is the latter which is of interest to students of the American linguistic scene. How exactly does this generous infusion take place?

Certain words have naturally crept into Italo-American speech because they deal with things and characters of America, or with usages and customs particularly American.

Chendì (f. pl.)—*candy.* In Italian there was no generic term referring to the same thing as American candy—rather words referring to special kinds of sweets. Further, American candy was simply an American institution and no old world name would do.

Muimpìccə (m.) (or) *muimbìccə* (m.)—*moving picture.* Used at least as often as *cinematografo,* this is a very interesting word to study closely. *In* is as close as the immigrant gets to *ing.* This, in turn, becomes *im* because pronounced together with *p* (a common phonetic change). And finally *p* becomes *b,* a phenomenon peculiar to south Italian dialects.

Lòffarə (m.)—*loafer; Bòmmə* (m.)—*bum.* A parent will almost invariably use these epithets, rather than Italian terms, in reprimanding the boy who has been out late, wasted his time, neglected his studies or otherwise incurred parental displeasure.

Ggiòbba (f.)—*job.* No native word could possibly have the same strength. *Un impiego,* employment, or *lavoro,* work, would be very pale indeed next to that beautifully all-inclusive term for American endeavor.

Bòssə (m. and f.)—*boss.* Used in the American sense and also as a polite form of address to shopkeepers, both men and women.

Bòssə (m.)—*bus.* Phonetically identical with the rendition of *boss.*

Ciùnghə (f.)—*chewing gum. Chewing,* the more vivid part of the term, becomes the name of the American pastime. The immigrant has also devised the verb *ciungarre*—half in jest—which means specifically *to chew gum.*

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Subhuè (m.)—*subway.* Of course it would be preposterous for any sane person to say, "I use the *ferrovia sotterranea* (subterranean railway) to go to work."

Tralicàrrə (m.)—*trolley car.* This jolly term, together with another concoction—*carro elettrico*—has fairly displaced the *tram* on which the immigrant rode in the old world. *Tralicàrrə* has a merry sound and is agreeable to the Neapolitan's festive spirit, which is apparent even in diction.

Bisinìssə (m.)— *business.* Like *ggiòbba, bisinìssə* is indispensable to immigrant self-expression. "How goes the bisinìssə," is the current greeting. So colorless a term as *affari* is seldom used.

Uascetòppə (m.)—*washtub; aisəbòcchəse* (m.)—*icebox.* These choice bits are the contribution of American plumbing.

Airècə—Irish. Two generations ago Italian laborers came in contact with workers and foremen whom everybody knew as *airèci.* Not being pedants they did not stop to consider that these people came from *Irlanda* and were therefore *irlandesi.*

Many other words have been adopted because of constant use and phonetic simplicity, and have almost completely replaced Italian or dialect equivalents.

Fàrma (f.)—*farm.*
Sciòppa (f.)—*shop.*
Stòro (m.)—*store.*
Pulìssə (m.)—*policeman.*
Beibbì (m. and f.)—*baby.*
Bèga (f.)—*bag.*
Bròscia (f.)—*brush.*
Tòffə—*tough.*
Dòppə—*dope.* (This last is used interchangeably with the Italian form *stupido.*)

Certain Italian words having a phonetic similarity to English words in current use are no longer used in their Italian sense, but have assumed the meaning of their near English homonyms.

Rendita in Italian means *income,* but in Italo-American speech it means *rent.* Similarly *sciabola* has changed in meaning from *sabre* to *shovel; grossiere* from *wholesaler* to *retail grocer; fattoria* from *farm-manager's house* to *factory;* and *(mirabile dictu!) genitore* from *parent* to *janitor.*

Grossiere and *grosserìa* (grocery) have attained a certain literary status in that they are used in the Italian-language press of New York in their new world connotation.

Salutations and current expressions, because they are heard and repeated so often, replace Italian forms almost invariably.

Orràitə—all right.
Ezorràitə—that's all right.
Uazzemàrə—what's the matter?
Cubbài—goodbye!
Cunnàittə—good night!
Alò—hello!

All these forms proved instantly irresistible to the immigrant even if he never succeeded in mastering enough English to make himself solely understood in that language. As the American populace pronounced them they were all so brisk and reflected the new tempo. They served so admirably well in daily contacts, in carrying on the *bisinìssə,* in telephone conversations, that such tempered terms as *va bene, addio, buona notte* were discarded—together with outworn clothing or antiquated ways of carrying about money.

Sciaràp—Shut up! This robust term has passed into literature. Readers of Ignazio Silone's "Bread and Wine" will remember a character who bore this American patronymic and was plagued with it even after he returned to his native village. Phonetically it is of interest because it illustrates how both in south Italian dialects and in New Yorkese, careless speech changes the intervocalic "t" to "d" and finally to "r." Because of the force with which it is uttered, it ends abruptly in "p" and the final "ə" is generally absent.

Ezzòl—That's all. Illustrates yet another phonetic principle of Italo-America speech—voiced "th" simply disappears rather than changes to "d" if the syllable in which it occurrs is not stressed.

The idioms which the immigrant has forged for himself on the American scene are perhaps the most delightful part of his speech. The words and phrases we have thus far enumerated were simply taken by him bodily out of English—because of the needs of his new life—and adopted to the simplicity of Italian phonology. His idioms, however, reflect his adult linguistic sense and his instinct for a picturesque speech. A few of them are surely worth recording.

Vai a Brucculì—You are going to Brooklyn, i.e., *You are going to die.* The deceased of the Italians of the East Side were and still are interred in the Catholic burial grounds in Brooklyn. Thus a very usual bit of Italo-American conversation one may overhear almost at any time will run as follows: "Don't go out with that cold, Giovanni, else you may soon be going to Brooklyn."

Far a fàit—To deal in blows. Far scecchènze—To indulge in hand-shaking; to patch up differences. Before the children are allowed to go and play in the street their mother will invariably exhort them—"Non fate a fàit." Almost invariably they will disregard the parental admonition, and almost as invariably they will receive as just retribution a few lusty open-handed blows over and above those they have exchanged—and the peremptory invitation—"Fate scecchènze." This scene has become part of the lore of the lower East Side.

Italo-American speech has all the modernity of American English. It drops an outmoded expression as rapidly as does American English. In the two decades that have elapsed since the first study of it was made by A. Livingston in the *Romanic Review,* Volume IX, it has kept steady pace with the changing times.

The terms *ghèlla* (girl) and *falò* (fellow) have given way to the more up-to-date *ghellafrèndə* and

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boifrèndə. *Spicchìsi* (speak-easy) and *munesciàinə* (moonshine) have come and gone. These institutions have not been entirely without effect: they have, for example, made it possible for the *cacchetèl* (cocktail) to take its place next to the patriarchal *vino*. And finally the *aiscùle* (high-school) and the *tìcci* (teachers) have assumed an important place in Italo-American speech in these serious times.

Apropos of this last term a rather subtle distinction is worthy of note. Band masters and orchestra leaders are *professori* or *maestri* but those to whom the instruction of the young is intrusted are *tìcci*.

A Few Conclusions

These notes are by no means exhaustive, yet they trace the general lines of the development of one of the more typical tongues of the American metropolitan scene, and point to a few interesting conclusions on this *langue vivante*.

(1) In Italian a word is usually stressed on the penult. The immigrant attains this same effect in a way all his own. He starts by stressing the last vowel sound of the borrowed words and then simply adds a vowel sound (usually "ə") in order to soften the harshness. Thus: ua sce *top* pə, ba *schet* tə.

(2) The infiltration of American English consists mainly of set phrases, and nouns and adjectives typical or descriptive of American life. Verbs, being the heart of the language, are rarely replaced while some semblance of the mother tongue continues to be spoken.

(3) Since so many of the words taken bodily from the English are nouns, the interesting question of gender arises. What gender do our genderless English nouns assume when they enter Italo-American speech? Why certain objects should belong to one gender or the other in any language is an old question, and one for which a logical answer has never been found. Here in Italo-American is this process at the very outset. Instinctively people who have always referred to things as either masculine or feminine choose one or the other gender for their new words. What lies behind this spontaneous and surely unreasoned choice? (I say "unreasoned," for grammar abides not in the *milieu* where this charming process evolves.)

I suspect both sound and meaning determine the gender. Thus candy, basket, bag, farm are all easily, softly said and they carry the idea of sweetness or capaciousness or repose. They have, in short, the essence of femininity.

On the other hand, how could business be anything but masculine? Also the thundering "subway" and that tongue-twister "moving-picture." Perhaps these surmises are a bit fanciful but along general lines they seem to be correct.

(4) Finally it seems difficult to avoid the conclusion that this particular speech is a transitory phenomenon, and will disintegrate into that stream of robustious American English of our large cities which has lapped up the débris of many tongues—as Mr. Mencken has amply shown. Even these vestiges of the tongue of Horace and Cicero will go the same way. Already the immigrants' grandchildren in our high schools, while they more or less understand this speech, have difficulty in reproducing it.

Whose Religion Is Shrinking?

An answer to "Is Your Religion Shrinking?" by Frank B. Copley published some weeks ago.

***By* Stanley B. James**

IT WAS the distinguishing feature of medieval religion that it extended to the whole of life. Since the gulf which now exists between Church and State was then inconceivable, the influence of the former on those responsible for government was constant. The theory of the divine right of kings to do as they pleased was of later, and Protestant, origin. Canossa had made it abundantly clear that even the greatest of Emperors could *not* do as he pleased, and the fact exercised no inconsiderable check on the tyrannical tendencies of monarchs. Commerce and industry were subject to the same authority. The merchant-guilds and craft-guilds, organized on a religious basis, endeavored to carry into effect the Church's teaching with regard to such matters as usury, adulteration, false weights and so forth. The guilds subordinated the profit-motive to one which sought to safeguard the dignity of the worker and the quality of his work. The Cross—symbol of the Faith and its moral implications—bore silent witness to Christian ideals amid the hucksters of the market and greeted the wayfarer in his travels. The universities enthroned theology as the queen of sciences and made it the basis of culture. Learning was definitely the responsibility of

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the Church, so that the term cleric became synonymous with the educated class. Even the community's recreations were related to its religion, as the mystery, miracle and morality plays bear witness. The Catholicism of those days, in fact, overflowed into every department of life. It suggested the very names of the streets and of the flowers which the children picked by the wayside. Not merely in theory but to no small extent in actual fact, life was a whole. Worship was related to work, creed to conduct.

Then came the upheaval of the sixteenth century and, in those countries which adopted the new religion, this marvelous medieval unity was wrecked. Secularism set up its standard on the territory once controlled in the interest of Catholic Christianity. In England the Church became virtually a department of the state; culture, throwing off the control of a sane philosophy, grew anarchic; commerce and labor went their ways to the bleak misery of the industrial revolution; economics adopted the individualistic and materialistic system of Adam Smith.

Under these conditions, the penalized Catholic communities in the countries indicated withdrew into their shells. Their religion was impotent to affect public life. Nor could it be wondered at if the prevalent secularism affected the faithful, suggesting that they had fulfilled their Christian obligations when they had maintained sacramental communion with the Church. Their piety became a private and individual thing that seemed to have but little bearing on daily life. Between clergy and laity there was but little vital contact. The robust religion of the Middle Ages had shrunk and shriveled. Save for the fact that it repeated the same creed and practiced the same rites, it was almost unrecognizable.

Leo's renaissance

At the close of the nineteenth century it was evident that the Church, under the leadership of Leo XIII, had found courage to reassert her claims over the lost territory of social and economic affairs. The challenge was voiced in the famous encyclical, *Rerum Novarum,* which boldly dealt with such questions as capital and labor, asserted the dignity of the worker, defined the duties of the state and demanded that governments should give special consideration to the poor. While the laborer was reminded of his obligation to render honest service, employers were enjoined to pay fair wages. Forty years later Pius XI supplemented this epoch-making document with an encyclical entitled *Quadragesimo Anno.* Especially did it bemoan the apostasy of the workers and strongly condemn those employers whose inhuman and un-Christian treatment of their employees was so largely responsible for this defection. A little later appeared another encyclical bearing on the same topics, and in this pronouncement, *Divini Redemptoris,* it was roundly asserted that certain Catholic employers, conscious of the fact that the highest Authority in the Church had condemned their methods, had prevented the reading of *Quadragesimo Anno* in their local churches.

By large numbers of the faithful, however, these papal documents were hailed as heralding a new era in the life of the Church. A sense of liberation from the confines of a narrow pietism, a joyful consciousness that the Church Militant was once again on the march and a resolute determination to secure adequate equipment for dealing with the problems now thrown open for Catholic investigation rewarded the papal initiative.

This response became still more emphatic when Catholic Action, proposing the participation by the laity in the apostolate of the hierarchy, was inaugurated. The very fact that it was to be a lay apostolate indicated the nature of the new offensive; that fact showed that it was to be an invasion in Christ's name of those spheres of activity to which the layman alone has access. And this deduction was confirmed when it was seen that the lay apostolate was to be organized on occupational lines. "Undoubtedly," wrote Pius XI, "the first and immediate apostles of the workingmen must themselves be workingmen, while the apostles of the industrial and commercial world should themselves be employers and merchants." By corporate effort and example those engaged in the same business or industry were to attempt the Christianization of their respective *milieux,* reaffirming the religious character and moral dignity attaching to every form of honest work and striving to secure such conditions as would make the exercise of that character and dignity practicable.

Naturally, in an age in which the claims of the manual worker have focused public attention on the problems of industry and the apostasy of the workers is the Church's chief concern, the onus of Catholic Action tends to fall on that class. It is it which constitutes the spearhead of the attack. Since the main danger today comes from a proletariat indoctrinated with atheistic communism, it is a Catholic proletariat which can best meet the situation. As the present Pontiff, while still known as Cardinal Pacelli, said in a communication to Cardinal Verdier, Archbishop of Paris: "In the complexity of the modern world the working classes take on a growing importance, an importance which it would be stupid and unjust to underestimate. The extent to which the representatives of labor are penetrated with the principles of the Gospel will decide in large measure the extent to which the society of tomorrow will be Christian." This does not mean, of course, that the workers have a monopoly of Catholic Action, but that they form the vanguard of the Church's militant forces and set the pace.

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The concrete realization of this situation can be seen in the Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne (commonly known as the J.O.C.), an organization led by the Belgian priest, Canon Cardijn. The ideals of this body, described by Pius XI as "the advance-guard of the Church," are indicated in a statement made by the founder. "I am convinced," said Cardijn, "that we are at a turning point in history. Religion must repenetrate social, professional and family life to its roots, in order that life shall develop and become fully human and that the whole of society be re-Christianized."

With these facts in mind (having already published a book on the subject which had been reviewed at length and without a single word of adverse criticism in the semi-official organ of the Vatican), I wrote an article entitled "Proletarian Catholicism," which appeared in THE COMMONWEAL, August 24, 1938. In that article, as in the present contribution, I stressed the expansive character of the new movement, comparing the Church before its advent to a besieged garrison.

"Is Your Religion Shrinking?"

Judge of my surprise therefore when in the same journal some months later there appeared from the pen of Mr. Frank B. Copley an "answer" to my article, bearing the title, "Is Your Religion Shrinking?" Introducing his subject, Mr. Copley says: "There are indications, including articles of late appearing in THE COMMONWEAL, that many Catholics are tending to shrink their religion into a little religion." Further on, dealing expressly with myself, he writes: "For one thing, if we follow Mr. James, the 'Catholicism of the future will be for the whole man, spiritual and physical.' May it not really be that the Catholicism of the past, instead of not being for the whole man, simply has followed the Master of the Christians in putting the spiritual first and that what now is proposed is to follow the master of the communists in putting the physical first?"

I can imagine several points of view from which my contribution might have been criticized, but I confess that it did not enter my mind that anyone would say that I was narrowing Catholicism, making of it "a little religion." That the religion of Dante, who applied his interpretation of Catholicism to the political and social problems of his age, was a smaller thing than that of the early Christians obliged to hide in the catacombs had never occurred to me. I should as soon have asserted that, when Saint Peter and his fellow apostles came out of their retreat on the Day of Pentecost and inaugurated the great missionary campaign that was to sweep the Empire, he was belittling Christianity. The idea that a religion "for the whole man" is a lesser thing than one confined to the "spiritual" passes my comprehension.

Apart from this particular difficulty I am troubled by Mr. Copley's revival of the old manichaean heresy which regarded the flesh as something unholy. Catholicism is the religion of the Incarnation. It blazons abroad the fact that "the Word became flesh." Its worship is sacramental, enlisting the whole man, spiritual and physical. From its beginning it has demanded that spiritual considerations should enter into and control material concerns. In the Epistle of Saint James the rich are censured because they have kept back the hire of their laborers—an economic question—and Saint Paul castigates the social parasite, declaring that if he will not work, neither should he eat. "At no time is the Church so clearly seen in the fulness of her mission," wrote the late Abbot Vonier, "as when she is defined as the people of God, dwelling on this earth. All those elements of life, all those activities that are necessary to the prosperity of a people thus become integral portions of Church life. . . . Now there is no activity in that people which would not be directly the work of the people of God; all their exertions, all their enterprises, all their labors of whatever kind, would have this end, the life of that people of God." So wrote one of the greatest theologians of our time. Note that he regards as expressing the fulness of the Church's mission that which my critic describes as a shrinkage.

There are other misunderstandings in this somewhat surprising article, as, for instance, the gratuitous assumption that the social revolution within the Church is to be effected, like the proletarian revolution outside the Church, by force. Needless to say, there was no more suggestion of such a thing in my article than in Our Lord's constantly repeated assertion that in His Kingdom the last would be first. The Hebrews were called out of slavery to be the religious leaders of mankind, and that leadership they acquired not by inflicting but by enduring suffering. Is it presumptuous to suppose that the wage-slaves of capitalism have been prepared for a great mission to the twentieth century world in a similar fashion?

Referring to the tenth Congress of the J.O.C., Canon Cardijn said: "It heralds the rise of a new generation of young Christian workers determined to consecrate their intelligence, their hearts and bodies, their work and future to deliver labor from injustice, to seal the laborer, labor itself with the seal of nobility, of dignity, of right and of duty." Addressing that same Congress, Cardinal Verdier declared that never since the Crusades had such a demonstration of enthusiasm been given or such a Christian spirit shown. The fact that Mr. Copley differs with me in his interpretation of the ideals professed by this organization is of no moment. It might be of great moment that his article appears to differ so diametrically from the individuals I have cited and from the implications of the late Pontiff's assertion that the J.O.C. was "an authentic form of Catholic Action."

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Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

MERELY to read such a book as the extraordinary study of communist propaganda in Chicago, the joint production of Professor Harold D. Lasswell and Dorothy Blumenstock, entitled "World Revolutionary Propaganda" (New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $3.50)—I mean, to read it without skipping, with attention—is quite definitely a heavy chore, even for readers already persuaded of the high importance of the main subject which it deals with. Really to study it, in the sense of checking its principal statements and exploring its sources and its cognate themes, would be to take on a life-time job. Even to review it in the ordinary meaning of that term, still more to criticise it legitimately, would require an apparatus of scholarship in so many fields of thought and investigation, some of them, psychiatry for example, highly abstruse, that few writers can possess; and certainly I am not one of them. Yet I think that it is also a book which is of quite exceptional value to the general reader and that the publisher does well to give to the public so solid and non-sensational a work dealing with a subject that is of vital importance, but which has been so predominantly treated with emotional passion, either for or against, that it becomes ever more difficult to penetrate the rhetorical fog that surrounds so much of its discussion and to get at the facts and realities covered up by the storms of charges and counter-charges.

It is a most gigantic task which the co-authors of this book set themselves to accomplish. While the great mass of factual material embodied in their pages—the statistics and digests of statistics and many analyses of psychological factors—deals well-nigh exclusively with the operations of communist propaganda in a single area, the city (and districts about the city) of Chicago during the period between 1930 and 1934 (although some of the data covers a longer period; for example, the data on strikes extends from 1919 to 1934), it is the relation of what went on in Chicago to what was going on elsewhere in the world that is of paramount concern both to the authors and to their readers. More than that, however, the primary value which the authors have sought to realize is to furnish, as it were, a point of reference by means of which the probable future success or failure (or else a mixture of both success and failure) for the world-wide revolutionary propaganda of the Third International of the Communist Party, aided, or at least encouraged, by the Soviet government of Russia, may be judged with something at least resembling scientific certainty.

For, as the authors tell us in their preface, "We deliberately look toward the future. As students of world politics, part of our problem is to be correct about the future. . . . Our expectation about the future may include the destiny of our person, our family, our nation, our race. It may include the destiny of man on earth and of the earth itself. With regard to political events, we weigh expectations about the future of influence. From this comes our study of Communism. Will those who are emotionally identified with communist symbols succeed in ruling America and in unifying the world?" That the authors should regard their subject from this fundamental, this universal point of view is the logical result of their belief that the evidence they have gathered in their years of study of their subject supports the view that the same basic changes (of the underlying beliefs and customs and traditions of society) are occurring in every modern nation.

To give anything like an adequate account of the methods employed by Professor Lasswell and Miss Blumenstock in their monumental study of world revolutionary propaganda would require space equal at least to their own introductory chapters, which is impossible; and any attempt at a summary, in my limited space, would be unjust. It must suffice me to say that with perhaps more than the ordinary amount of suspicion of much of the "methodology" (to employ the inevitable lingo) of modern science in its expository fields at least, I yet found myself convinced of the reasonableness as well as the care and prudence with which the complicated system was applied to the mass of facts gathered so assiduously in the wake of the communist propagandists in Chicago.

What is of more practical importance to the general readers of this extremely valuable book than the methods employed is the nature of the answer supplied by the authors to their own query, which is central to their investigation and which they themselves state as follows in their preface: "A great question mark in world politics, then, is this: Will the Third International succeed in universalizing the Soviet Union? Regardless of local failures or concession, will the trend of history be toward world union in the name of Communism?"

So far as Chicago was concerned, the net result of all the extensive propaganda did not yield any great success for the organized forces of world revolution, according to the authors of this book. In many respects, they declare, the propagandists "achieved the opposite of what they aimed at." As for the world mission of the propagandists, the authors find that the same restrictive factors which blocked their local efforts in Chicago are likely to effect the same result elsewhere. In fact, so far as the United States are concerned, the conclusion is reached that "the chief function of the Third International in America has been to expedite the rejection of the Russian revolution (of the center). It was not sufficiently menacing, however, to stimulate greatly the appearance of an American version of the world revolutionary pattern of the epoch."

It is to be sincerely hoped that their judgment is correct. At all events, the data on which that judgment is based, along with the line of reasoning by which the data is classified and defined, should be most closely scrutinized by those qualified to do that work, while general readers can be assured that the account given of communism actually at work, devoid of all emotional coloring, is at once more fascinating, and in a sense more terrifying, in its proof of the revolutionary aspects of our age than most of the more highly colored literature of the subject. And, of course, it is much more reliable than most of the emotional sort.

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Communications

CATHOLICS AND THE AMERICAN WAY

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: I think the article "Catholics and the American Way," by Robert C. Pollock is a breath of fresh air in our Catholic world, which has become so stuffy and artificial. With an article like this I am proud to show THE COMMONWEAL to my non-Catholic friends.

WILFRED VIOLETTE.

Chicago, Ill.

TO the Editors: I have read with great interest the article, "Catholics and the American Way," by Robert C. Pollock. It contained much that has cried out for statement these many years. There should be not the slightest question in the mind of any American Catholic as to the acceptance and active fulfillment of his duties as a citizen. A passive acceptance of democratic abstractions is not enough: Catholics have too much to gain—and to contribute—in America. It seems to me that too many Catholics today are making the mistake of confusing themselves as individuals with the Church: the mission of the Church is world-wide and must be fulfilled under many political systems, good and bad; hence the Church cannot be committed to any one political system. True enough. But *we* are not the Church: we are, as Catholics, cells of the Church and we are, as citizens, cells in a democracy. Let us not shirk either the one duty or the other. The Catholic citizen (Attorney-General Murphy is a good example) is one of the chief guarantees of the future and indivisible unity of our democracy. Upon that unity the welfare of the Church depends more than we know. May I suggest that THE COMMONWEAL open its columns to more such articles?

M. S. BOWEN.

Billerica, Mass.

TO the Editors: I read the article "Catholics and the American Way" (June 30) with interest, for it is just the sort of thing Catholics need to clarify their position in our democracy. Don't you think the Church in Europe has allowed a long bourbon tradition to petrify her? It seems to me the point made by the author is a good one—that the American Way can release Catholic social energies. While not a Catholic myself, I find this sort of article quite encouraging. Judging by the reaction of a couple of my Catholic friends it should point the way for many Catholics.

WILLIAM A. KNOX.

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Robert C. Pollock's article, "Catholics and the American Way," was especially timely in the light of Bishop O'Hara's recent statement that "In America we are indeed fortunate, for we have a democratic form of government that is as near to the ideal as one could expect. Our entire American philosophy of government is based on the grand religious truth of the dignity of the individual and on the sacredness of his rights."

This article firmly roots the Church in the American tradition of democracy. However, Bishop O'Hara, recognizing the present crisis of democracy, goes a step further in declaring, "It follows that it is our common responsibility to exert every effort to maintain it and to resist every movement set on foot to limit or destroy it, and to stir up hatred, bitterness and strife amongst us."

This task, "to maintain" democracy and "resist every movement to limit or destroy it," would be made clearer by an article bringing this American Catholic tradition up to date. This article, which should critically evaluate the American scene today in the light of what Dr. Pollock calls "collaboration between Catholics and the democratic forces," and the discussion which is bound to ensue, would clarify for most of us precisely how we are to apply Catholic social doctrine to maintain and defend democracy.

HAROLD G. KING.

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: With great interest I have just read the article by Robert C. Pollock, "Catholics and the American Way." It would be splendid if he would follow this with one explaining why Catholic countries like Spain and France (before the Revolution) were so lacking in democracy that the only chance for a "common" man with ambition to succeed was to become a cleric. The Church was 100 percent democratic and a man's ability opened doors to him in aristocratic circles only if he were a prelate. As a result the Church sometimes attracted men of brains who were not always spiritual. I believe there were actual cases like those shown in French novels, "The Black and The Red," etc.

The Church has simply banned such stories, but it might be better to explain, and place the blame, not on the writers, but on conditions in these countries.

It is a curious contradiction that this great freedom of opportunity should have developed in a country established by broad-minded statesmen of predominantly Protestant religion. As I recall, there was only one Catholic signer of the Declaration of Independence. Of course, Catholics have more than made up for this lack by fighting for the country in all subsequent wars.

A. L. DONAHUE.

CATHOLICS IN TRADE UNIONS

Flushing, N. Y.

TO the Editors: In one sentence John Cort both elucidates the basis for the "craft" (agrarian) criticism of industrialism and permits a reasonable inference that ACTU has no "philosophy of labor" adequate to effect an essential change in the worker's status (THE COMMONWEAL, June 30).

Speaking of eliminating "the brutalizing features of mass production" he says: "Perhaps this will involve a complete abolition of the assembly line, perhaps only a modification involving the combination of several operations to each worker or the frequent rotation of workers from one operation to another." This "reform" by inference seems to concede the validity of the "craft-agrarian" criticism of

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industrialism, which is chiefly the systematic subdivision of labor on a product which one craftsman could produce by himself. (No, John, NOT primarily the use of machinery.) It also seems to take for granted the perpetuation of this principle of industrialism, though the application might be somewhat more "humane."

It may be that an unreserved acceptance of the "craft" principle is implied in "a complete abolition of the assembly line," if that means abolishing subdivision of work wherever a product could be made *in toto* by one craftsman. And it may be that in a case where production of a socially desirable article is practical only under "factory" methods the "modification" suggested, plus worker's cooperative ownership and control will apply, in which case it is the best solution. However, the ACTU reforms seem to be concerned solely with alleviating the "brutalizing features" of mass production and not at all with eradicating the industrialized mass production system itself by promoting among the workers a "personalist, craft-agrarian philosophy," with related implications as mentioned by Tom Barry. Unless such philosophy is definitely incorporated into the ACTU plan of education, the ACTU will never stimulate any individual worker to seek the personal revolution, that is to seek to exercise his own will, intellect and creative faculties with respect to a product which one craftsman could make, and thus become a craftsman. In the measure in which current industrial theories of subdivision of labor appear to be sanctioned by labor leaders the worker will be content to resemble a machine (i.e. by "specializing") and thus will remain a collectivised robot. It seems that the ACTU program could be more "radical," as Tom suggested.

With all best wishes to the ACTU and warmest personal regards to John Cort, the foregoing sentiment is generally concurred in by Adé Béthune, Tom Barry, Peter Maurin and

R. E. Scott.

Flushing, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Now that the gentlemen have completed their erudite abstractions on the subject of unionism, may a woman add a few practical notes? Surely his Holiness Pius XI did not intend the interpretation Mr. Cort places upon the quoted passage. Surely a worker's social obligations are not paramount to his fundamental rights as a human being! The right NOT to organize is as legitimate as the right TO organize. Mr. Cort's connotation that a non-union man contributes nothing to the common good is false reasoning.

Who is the best judge of a "bona fide union"? It is the man who knows the works, the members, the methods employed. Can Mr. Cort tell my laundry collector that he is doing society a favor by joining the C.I.O., when this honest driver knows it is certainly doing himself no good to join? Certainly a union—any union—which coerces men into membership is no *bona fide* union. And who is going to do the checking up? The men will not talk; they are afraid!

When I was a small child my father was invited to join a newly organized wood carvers' union. The idea of artists unionizing had not yet taken hold and to my father it was preposterous; so he refused to join. His name was published on a scab list and he was not allowed to work in accredited shops. Well, there were four of us and we had to eat, so father capitulated. They rated him first class and forbade him to work under a certain set salary. This was all very well while times were good; but when the depression struck (I think about 1907), it was a different story. Millionaires stopped having Louis XVI panels in their music rooms and high class carvers could not find assignments. My father could have earned enough in an open shop to keep us out of debt—but the union said no! So for six months he was idle . . . and we were hungry. Young as I was then, I can still see his haggard face. (Multiply this experience by tens of thousands and you have an excellent argument for the right NOT to organize).

It is one thing to play around with abstractions; it is another thing to walk highway and byway and learn at first hand how theories operate. Forcing all workmen to join unions presupposes that all employers are rogues, which is nonsense. The real, the most-to-be-feared fascist of this age is the autocratic labor leader. America can turn away from all the *isms,* but the troubles of labor are bread and butter troubles. Marie Duff.

FATHER JOGUES

Lake George, N. Y.

TO the Editors: The exercises attendant on the unveiling of the Father Jogues Monument in the State Park at Lake George conveyed more than local significance. The distinguished gathering from various cities emphasized interest in the tribute to the Lake's heroic discoverer. . . .

The monument to Father Jogues will remain as a reminder of peace. His message from Algonquin to Iroquois has not lost its importance today. There is appropriateness in the monument's location; that stone of remembrance stands over the graves of French and English soldiers of colonial times. They were not less ardent in battle than Hurons and Mohawks.

Three years ago a group came out of an obscurity deeper than Jogues's to promote the idea of a state memorial. The group grew to a society, not insignificant in number, to become encouraged by the leadership of Mr. John S. Burke, president of the B. Altman Company, and the guidance of Mr. Joseph J. Early, associate editor of the Brooklyn *Eagle,* who presented the request to the Legislators at Albany. The request was endorsed by hundreds of persons prominent in educational life. Worthy of special mention was the immediate and enthusiastic approval of the Right Reverend Ernest Milmore Stires, Bishop of Long Island, and for many years a summer resident at Lake George.

It is significant too that the legislative bill of appropriation received a unanimous vote of approval, and was signed by Governor Lehman. The Honorable Benjamin F. Feinberg of Plattsburg introduced the bill in the Senate and the Honorable Harry A. Reoux of Warrensburg presented it in the Assembly.

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As a member of the group whose aim has been realized, it becomes a duty to congratulate the legislative members, in whose district Lake George is situated, on their interest in a public memorial whose spirit is not limited by territorial bounds.

PETER MORAN, C.S.P.

FAMILY SECURITY FOR AMERICA

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: I read the article, "Family Security for America," by Harold Maslow in THE COMMONWEAL (June 16), with great interest.

It is unquestionably true that our wage system bears no relation to family responsibilities and needs. It is also true that only in our direct relief set up, with its social stigma, is there recognition of the problem. There would seem to be no sound reason against family security provision in our social security mechanism. There are thousands of large family units that are forced to seek relief supplementation because the wages earned are not sufficient to provide the ordinary necessities of life. To most honest, self-respecting wage-earners this is a degrading and humiliating exerience. There is justification for establishing the principle of family security as a matter of right in our social security structure.

Of course the proposal would require the uprooting of some of the fixed concepts the American people now have. But American concepts in the field of security legislation have been undergoing radical changes within the last six years, and I believe it would take a relatively short period of time before the principle of family security would be generally accepted.

The specific form which family security should take is a matter which requires considerable study. The relationship of this system with our present systems of relief and social security and its integration into the present mechanism must be examined very carefully. But the concept of family security is sound, and efforts in the direction of achieving public acceptance of the principle should be undertaken at once.

LESTER ROSNER,
Assistant State Secretary,
American Labor Party.

THE CHAMBERS ARE AT IT AGAIN

San Francisco, Calif.

TO the Editors: Why don't you take a leaf from other magazines, which present two sides of a question by authorities?

In your number for June 23 appears an article by biased author Munzer, "The Chambers Are At It Again," which never mentions saving of taxes by government in competition with private enterprise, wages or efficiency.

As Americans are not dumb, let us have both sides instead of propaganda. Business could, if given a chance, put the 12,000,000 idle men at work instead of the wild political purchase of votes through extravagance in spending other people's money and ruining home-owners and taxpayers. There are Catholic employers.

SEVERAL OF THEM, WHO PROTEST.

Points & Lines

Relief and Revolt

THE RELIEF ACT covering the situation during the WPA strike was passed the last night of the old fiscal year—June 30. The AP reported July 1:

> Mr. Roosevelt expressed his dissatisfaction with many features of the bill, but said that he obviously could not withhold his approval "and thereby stop work relief for the needy unemployed. . . . Relief officials . . . estimated that the bill would provide an average of 2,000,000 jobs monthly, compared with an average of almost 3,000,000 during the last year.
>
> Mr. Roosevelt mentioned four specific objections to the bill:
>
> 1. A requirement that security wages in different localities shall vary no more than is justified by differences in cost of living, but that the current national average shall be maintained. This, Mr. Roosevelt said, probably would impose a reduction in the North and West and an increase in the South.
>
> 2. A requirement that project workers, except veterans, who have been continuously employed for more than 18 months shall be laid off for 30 days. A Senate proposal which would have allowed some discretion was rejected.
>
> 3. A limit on administrative costs to 3.4 per cent. Mr. Roosevelt said that although the figure is about the present overhead, the cut in the total expenditures would raise it on a percentage basis if equal efficiency were maintained.
>
> 4. Abolition of the Federal Theatre, which he said "singles out a special group of professional people for a denial of work in their own profession."

Astute *Time* reported the Act thus:

> Provided $1,755,600,000 in all; $1,477,000,000 of it for WPA to support an average of 2,000,000 workers.
>
> Provided that $11,000,000 be set aside for white-collar projects other than theatre.
>
> Fixed at $52,000 the size of any WPA building roject.
>
> Retained one-man control of WPA. (Federal Works Administrator Carmody promptly announced he would retain Colonel Francis ["Pink"] Harrington whose Army pay of $7,200 the Senate supplemented with $2,800.)
>
> Restored to WPA $125,000,000 which the House wished to divert to PWA.
>
> Provided that workers shall be furloughed without pay every 18 months, but only for 30 days (instead of 60 as desired by the House).
>
> Raised Farm Security Administration's allotment to $143,000,000, left National Youth Administration's at $100,000,000 (still $20,000,000 above last year).

Event soon proved that *Time* overlooked most provocative clause in the Act. *Business Week* writes of it:

> Abolition of prevailing hourly rates, requiring all WPA employees to work 130 hours for their monthly security wage, is expected to have the effect of purging WPA rolls of workers who either have now or can find outside employment. The prevailing wage requirement was forced on WPA in 1935 by organized labor which claimed that otherwise WPA would tend to undermine wage rates in outside employment.

The immediate effect of this abolition, however, was in fact a strike, led by the AFL building trades unions and backed by other unions, AFL and CIO together. A strike

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against a government agency and a congressional law is technically highly revolutionary, but the excitement—to judge from the newspapers—was not very great nor widespread. Many prominent newspapers refrained altogether from editorial comment. Not the New York *Daily News*, undoubtedly read by more WPA workers than any other:

> We do not see how the government can yield to these labor leaders and the men they are pulling off the projects. . . . The whole WPA set-up, all over the country, is under the control and regulation of Congress. Congress has made changes in the system—changes whose wisdom and justice are debatable, but which are written into the law. . . . Whatever the consequences, they are strikes against the government; strikes against the law—which is supposed to be amended by our elected law-makers and not by labor leaders using direct action. We do not see how the government can back down in this controversy—any more than Calvin Coolidge as governor of Massachusetts in 1919 could shrink from using all the force necessary (though no more than necessary) to break the Boston police strike.

The liberal New York *Post*, an ultra-New-Deal paper, writes the same:

> A strike by its nature is a test of economic strength. Obviously no group in a democracy can use such a weapon successfully against the government. The members of the groups strike against the whole people and against themselves.

The Scripps-Howard *Houston Press* says:

> Now that Congress, following the WPA Administrator's advice, has corrected its mistake [of putting in the prevailing wage clause in 1935] the correction should stand. Strikes against the new law are ill advised, and Colonel Harrington is right in taking the position that men who refuse to work shall be dropped from WPA rolls.

The Baltimore *Sun* is also against the strike:

> . . . Being a work relief agency, the WPA is bound to give its employees a security wage. But it runs contrary to its own purpose when it pays wages on the same basis as priate industry.

The New York *Herald Tribune* says "Abolish the WPA":

> No better argument could be had for the abandonment of the whole WPA experiment than the present strike of its workers.

The New York *Times* explains:

> The present difficulties of the WPA flow in large part out of the fact that it is neither normal employment nor normal relief, but a peculiar sort of hybrid. . . . The unions, in effect, hold that the WPA is not "relief" but "employment." But what would be the implications of accepting such a view? . . . It would make work relief not merely self-perpetuating but self-expanding; and it would finally bankrupt the government. But if WPA is primarily "relief," the position of the striking unions is indefensible. . . . The present situation could not occur under a cooperative system of federal-state relief, with administration decentralized in the localities.

Relief workers are supposed to be dropped from the rolls after an absence of five days. At this writing that period was catching up on the strikers, and Congress was reported to be on the point of going again into the issue of security-versus-prevailing wages.

The Screen

Buck D'Artagnan Rides Again

EDWARD SMALL'S production of Dumas's "The Man in the Iron Mask" can hardly be pointed to as an outstanding example of the best in romantic, blood-and-thunder cinema. It belongs, all right, to the robust "I am a soldier, sire," school, and is full of seventeenth-century fancy costumes, plotting statesmen, villainous villains, underground possages, pitiful prisoners shrieking in the Bastille and exciting dueling scenes such as the one in which D'Artagnan and his four pals take on ninety-eight of the King's men. George Bruce's screenplay handles adroitly Dumas's complicated and fanciful plot about sadistically wicked, "I am the state" Louis XIV and his noble twin brother. This Philippe, secretly brought up by D'Artagnan and the Three Musketeers, is later used by Louis until the selfish monarch confines him in the Bastille with an iron mask over his face. But throughout all the long scheming, fighting, love making (Maria Theresa, sent to marry Louis, falls in love with Philippe) and final retribution, when Philippe is rescued, there is an amazing combination of underacting and overacting that is much hammier than even Dumas deserves. Louis Hayward as the twins, Joan Bennett lovely in a black wig again, Warren William, Joseph Schildkraut and the rest of the large cast perform as if their director, James Whale, couldn't decide whether to modernize Dumas or play his swashbuckling in a last century style. Audiences who want intrigue and adventure no matter how it's dished up will welcome this return of Porthos, Aramis and Athos.

Quite opposite to the Dumas movie is "Career," produced by Robert Sisk and directed by Leigh Jason. This unpretentious film adapted from Phil Stong's novel combines some of the treatment and simplicity of "Our Town" with "A Man to Remember" to give us a sincere and homely little story about a small town in the state famous for thirty million chickens, lots of corn and cattle and fewer illiterates than any other state. From events that take place on the Fourth of July, Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve of 1931, we learn many interesting and moving things about the people of Pittsville, Iowa, especially about Edward Ellis who prefers to continue his career as an honest storekeeper until becoming president of the bank is absolutely necessary. When the romance between his son and the banker's daughter seems to duplicate an early, not too happy, love affair of his own, he is able to advise and console. Janet Beecher, Anne Shirley, Leon Errol, Alice Eden and John Archer, the last two selected in the "Gateway to Hollywood" contest, help Mr. Ellis to make this film pleasing and convincing, despite one of his speeches, which is long and unconvincing.

Readers of comic strips rushing to the movies to see the latest exploits of Tailspin Tommy will see exactly what they expect as Tommy (John Trent) does his dives and daredevil tricks in "Stunt Pilot." This wholesome hero takes his friend's place in a particularly dangerous flight, manfully socks the villains and performs with cartoon decorum throughout this never-meant-to-be-believed story.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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More Books of the Week

Thomas Wolfe's Posthumous Book

The Web and the Rock, by Thomas Wolfe. New York: Harper and Brothers. $3.00.

IT IS NOT unduly cynical to say that Thomas Wolfe died at exactly the right time in his life for his perpetuation as a genius. Wolfe wrote only one book that approached greatness. That book was his first, "Look Homeward, Angel," and all his work since has been a thin, watered-down repetition of the rich sensuality of that work.

For those who have not read "Look Homeward, Angel" there remains a definite experience in store. No richer novel has ever, perhaps, been written. Its values are not intellectual, and where they are spiritual, they are amorphous or esoteric, but as a purely sensual experience, as an example of the impact of sheer words and physical experience upon a reader, it has few equals.

Where that book was rich, Wolfe's succeeding novels have been merely wordy. I think the reason is that Wolfe never really grew to any extent. From this current novel and its predecessor, which was slightly better, one can only get the impression of a great oaf stumbling around the earth, trying to kid, first himself, then the public that he was on a constant journey of miraculous discovery.

The George Webber of this book is the Eugene Gant of the others, who is, of course, Wolfe, himself. It is not so much that he is mad—although he would have liked to think he was as mad as, say Keats—as that he is childish, uncontrolled and without guts. The publishers have made a great fuss about what they call "the most lifelike love story anybody ever wrote" and the "only" love story Wolfe ever wrote. This is not so. There is a very poignant love story in "Look Homeward, Angel," one of the best portrayals of young, lyrical love that has ever been written. That the "love" story in "The Web and the Rock" is nothing more than a cheap little adultery with an arty phoney old enough to be the boy's mother is perhaps more of a comment on the publisher's idea of love than on Wolfe's.

Many writers "fail to recognize a problem in art." Virtually no one writing English today can describe physical action exactly and well, with the exception of Kenneth Roberts and Ernest Hemingway. Wolfe is no better than most in this respect. But there are great holes in the book which serve as evidence that he often recognized a problem other than that of physical action, but simply did not try to solve it. He ignores the family relationship of the adulteress, who has a husband and a daughter, neither of whom speak a single word or enter into a single scene of a book 695 pages long. He makes no attempt to account for the relationship between the boy and the older woman, other than to let us know that the woman was a good cook, despite her wealth. To Wolfe, perhaps, that was enough reason to enter into such a liaison.

Like the curate's egg, however, parts of the book are excellent. A good part of the first 300 pages are worth reading, particularly the story of the negro gone berserk in the southern mountain town on a winter night. Curiously, the best parts of the book have to do with George Webber only as spectator. Apparently, if Wolfe had ever been able to get out of himself for more than a couple of pages at a time, he might have gone some place after

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"Look Homeward, Angel." Well, there's no use messing around with this any more. "The Web and the Rock" as a whole isn't worth reading. But if you haven't read "Look Homeward, Angel," get yourself a copy. Modern Library puts it out as one of its "giants."

HARRY SYLVESTER.

DRAMA

My Heart's in the Highlands, by William Saroyan. New York: Harcourt, Bruce and Company. $2.00.

MR. SAROYAN may be surprised to hear that he has the innocence of Barrie and the braggadocio of Shaw. Then again, he may not be surprised; for in his introduction he admits he is a braggart—honest, unspoiled and concerned about valid potentialities in living and in art. He also admits that the meaning of his play is "the meaning of reality itself" which cannot be expressed in phrases beginning, "Well, it means . . . " Its message, he points out, is that "It is better to be a good human being than a bad one."

For the benefit of those who did not see the beautiful and imaginative production of "My Heart's in the Highlands" staged by the Group Theatre last spring: this one-act play is actually about a poet and his son who are really the same person at different ages and who enjoy the same amazement at life's freshness and wonder. They don't have any money ("You can't eat your cake and have it too"), but they do have a lot of fun. Their happiness is greatly increased when an aged trumpet player, whose heart's in the highlands, plays for them and for their neighbors who bring gifts of food. Mr. Saroyan's play, formless, naïvely direct, with simple American language and humor, reads like a folktale. Its best scenes have a pathetic, tender warmth that well expresses Saroyan's resentment against greed, deceit and unkindliness and his perplexity at a troubled world. The book, perhaps to give you your two dollar's worth, includes a preface by Harold Clurman, director of the Group Theatre, quotations from the reviews at the time of the New York run and the author's fine, gay short story on which the play is based. Critical opinions vary from Saroyan's own "classic" and Clurman's sane praise to "delightful," "human sweetness," "nonsense" and "crackpot."

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

ECONOMICS

Economics: Principles and Problems, a textbook for Catholic colleges, by Frank O'Hara, Joseph M. O'Leary and Edwin B. Hewes. New York: D. Van Nostrand Company. $3.50.

THOUGH it follows the traditional division of subject matter, the book is particularly noteworthy for the painstaking completeness of its treatment. The chapter on population, including as it does sound recommendations as to the significance and solution for a dwindling population, is outstanding.

The authors reveal the Catholic approach by stress on the moral, legal and other social activities of man, all of which are amalgamated in man's indivisible personality as created by God. At the same time the distinct nature of the economic viewpoint in all its modern aspects is allowed.

However the occasional resumés of official Catholic opinion as expressed by the Holy Father are not always fortunate, as for instance the closing paragraph in the chapter on business cycles, where the application of the encyclicals is peculiarly strained.

AUSTIN MURPHY.

Truth in Accounting, by Kenneth MacNeal, C.P.A. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. $3.50.

ONE WOULD not expect a book on accounting to be particularly interesting to a general reader. Bookkeeping and accounting are matters that have a mystery all their own, and one which has a paralyzing effect on the lay mind. Confront even a very intelligent man with the balance sheet of a corporation—or even of a charitable organization—and his mind in most cases becomes a blank.

Mr. MacNeal, who is a leader in his profession of accountancy, has undertaken to write a book which shall give some hint of why balance sheets are needlessly confusing, and in many instances grossly misleading. The result is a fascinating book which can be guaranteed understandable to anyone who knows the difference between a profit and a loss. Here are none of those metaphysical abstractions which so confuse and deaden our minds in most books on bookkeeping. What the author has done will not enable the reader to start at once the practice of professional accountancy, but it will suggest to him very persuasively some of the things that are presently wrong with the art.

Mr. MacNeal's idea is that these wrong practices result from the conservatism of the profession, which insists upon preparing statements "in accordance with principles suited only to conditions existing many years ago." He points out that the art, as far as modern civilization is concerned, came into existence in the Middle Ages, when the only interested party was the owner of the business involved. "It . . . appears probable that early accounting was utilized almost solely for the purpose of giving information to the owner-manager of a business, and that this owner-manager was, by the nature of his business, interested only in 'counting the cost.' . . . As yet the creditor and the absentee stockholder had not entered the picture."

The creditor began entering the picture in a serious way in the nineteenth century; before that credit was given only when a man's word was as good as his bond; financial statements did not particularly matter. But industrial capitalism could not so operate. "Creditors, consisting of bankers and tradesmen, found that it was possible to lend money or to extend credit on the basis of the worth of the owner, with the knowledge that huge unexpected losses were impossible." That could be done only by knowing the "worth of the owner," which meant the introduction of independent auditors. Since their purpose was to protect the creditor, they took the line of undervaluing assets rather than running any risk of overvaluing them. The result was often an untruthful statement, but one which was untruthful in a conservative direction and hence to the advantage of the creditor.

The late nineteenth century brought the absentee stockholder into the picture as a third party at interest. But his interest was not the same as the creditor's or the owner's. It is essential to his interest that he know as precisely as possible the actual worth of the business in which he is investing. Yet accountants continue their conservative practice, as though this new interest did not exist. Their motives are honorable, yet they grossly deceive. And business men with less honorable motives can take advantage of known accounting practices to mulct the public.

To find out how this is done and how the condition might be remedied, you will have to read "Truth in Accounting." It is well worth it, if only because some day it might save you a lot of money (if you have any to save).

HARRY LORIN BINSSE.

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FICTION

Gamble's Hundred, by Clifford Dowdey. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. $2.50.

THIS is a regional novel written by a native Virginian, himself a descendant of Sir Humphrey Blunt. In his second novel (the first was "Bugles Blow No More") which is also laid in his home state, Mr. Dowdey's historical background of tidewater Virginia is never obtrusive or overwhelming. He has achieved a natural and seemingly effortless blending of fancy and fact in the book's references to the late seventeenth century Virginia of Bacon's Rebellion fame and in the more expanded picture of the first third of the eighteenth century.

In this well-paced narrative of Williamsburg and vicinity of 1736, the author writes of an era of snuff boxes, wigs and the sort of fops Dr. Johnson so bitterly inveighed against in his "London." It was a time when formal manners were still not much more than a veneer over the essentially coarse and brutal natures of men. It was a period of black and indentured white slaves, of punishments in the stocks for felony, branding for slander and of the great perversion of head rights. Among the diversions available to the privileged were attendance at pretentious plantation parties and the occasional witnessing of a theatrical production such as the students' presentation at William and Mary College of Addison's *Cato*. But it was likewise a ruthless and corrupt time of land acquisition by despicable methods and of tyrannical practices.

The novel's love affair between virile backwoodsman and surveyor, Christopher Ballard, and the glamorous Evelyn Frane, wife of Chris's temporary employer, never really transcends a mutual physical attraction. It is a disappointment to Christopher, to the reader and perhaps even to the author who does not seem to be on the same certain footing here as he is elsewhere in his narrative.

"Gamble's Hundred" may evoke nostalgia in some Virginians, resentment in others, but to a mid-western reviewer the book remains an immensely readable and well-integrated tale of historical value and literary merit.

ELISABETH ANN MURPHY.

POETRY

From the Four Winds: selected poems from "Spirit," with a Preface by Francis X. Talbot, S.J. Cornwall-on-Hudson, New York: Idlewild Press. $1.00.

THOSE WHO are today speculating, and they are many, as to the relations of art and the Christian spirit and the world about will find much ground for encouragement in this little volume. While there is the resilient implication of tradition throughout these verses, the tradition is here used as it should be used, for enrichment to supplement the always partial press of the present moment, for stimulus to the inevitably limited individuality of any one artist. "Drama of Dramas" by Fray Angelico Chavez is a good example of the way in which a great tradition of expression suggests to the mind of the present what, unaided, it might not have known.

Not the least interesting thing in this book is the way in which the resources of contemporary experiments in other fields of verse and imagery and movement are brought to the service of themes which it is easy to treat traditionally. Francis Maguire's "The Bull" is an example. In such a poem the Christian point of view is implicit rather than explicit, no less forceful for being so and wider in its possible appeal.

It is, of course, the constant task of religious thought and feeling to address itself to present circumstances. Isabel Harriss Barr's "Wind in the Bracken" speaks so to the passion of our time, and Jessica Powers's, "To One Killed in War," to its fear. This ministry to the moment means not only attention to the crises of the moment but to the ever-recurring routines of spiritual life. That is why the poems that use the day-to-day imagery are so serviceable, like Sister Madeleva's "My Best Dress."

Altogether this is an encouraging volume in a field where promise is not uncommon and achievement difficult and rare.

HELEN C. WHITE.

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The Inner Forum

NEWS comes from Paris *via* an article by George C. Williamson in the London *Tablet,* that the Sainte Chapelle is to be restored to use as a place of worship and is once more to assume its original function, that of being a giant reliquary for the Crown of Thorns. It is almost fifty years since this amazing structure has been regularly used for ecclesiastical purposes, although occasional Masses have been celebrated there. The building is of particular interest architecturally, for it approximates the most closely of any surviving Gothic edifice the modern idea of building: a rigid armature on which are hung non-supporting enclosing walls. In this case the armature is of incredibly delicate stone masonry while the non-bearing walls are of glass, much of it now modern, but even so, glorious in effect.

Mr. Williamson gives a resumé of the history of the Crown of Thorns, based largely upon the findings of Robault de Fleury in the nineteenth century. The first known reference to the crown is of the fifth century by Saint Paulinus of Nola. It was said to be preserved at Mount Sion in Jerusalem. In 1063 it was translated to Byzantium. In 1204 it fell into the hands of the armies of the Fourth Crusade. Within a few years King Baudoin II deposited it with the Republic of Venice as security for a loan and offered it to Saint Louis of France at a very large price. The French King gladly accepted the offer and set to work to build a fitting home for so precious an object. The result was the Sainte Chapelle, where the crown was venerated until the time of the French Revolution. Luckily it was not destroyed. After being kept in a variety of places, it was in 1804 deposited by the government in the treasure of Notre Dame cathedral, where it has remained until now, exposed for veneration only when special circumstances offered occasion.

The Crown of Thorns in its present condition is not an actual crown of thorns, but rather a sort of framework on which the thorns were mounted. This would account for the fact that there is a considerable number of individual thorns in various shrines and churches throughout Europe. It is rather a crown of canes or stems or rushes, plaited and bound with more rushes, about an inch wide and ten or twelve inches in diameter. It has, however, been identified by botanists as being formed from a recognized species of thorny plant.

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